

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8479

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AF, IR, PK
SUBJ: IRAN RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

REFS: KABUL 3282 EXDIS (NOTAL), TEHRAN 4176 EXDIS (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. MFA OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED OUR EARLIER REPORTS THAT IRANIANS AND AFGHANS HAVE OVERCOME ALL THEIR HELMAND RIVER PROBLEMS, INCLUDING PROPOSED AFGHAN DAM NEAR IRANIAN BORDER. DISCUSSION WITH VISITING KABUL POL COUNS TOUCHED ON A NUMBER OF OTHER SUBJECTS INCLUDING PASHTUNISTAN, BALUCHISTAN, AFGHAN ARMY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING CALL ON HIM BY VISITING KABUL POL COUNS FLATIN, MFA DEPARTMENT HEAD SHIVA-RAZAVI CONFIRMED THAT, AS FAR AS IRANIANS ARE CONCERNED, THERE ARE NO MORE PROBLEMS WITH AFGHANISTAN ON HELMAND RIVER WATERS. THIS IS IN LINE WITH EARLIER INFORMATION KABUL AND TEHRAN HAD OBTAINED FOLLOWING NAIM'S MAY 10 VISIT TO THE SHAH (REFTELS).

2. WHEN FLATIN EXPRESSED USG PLEASURE TO FIND IRAN-AFGHAN RELATIONSHIPS SO MUCH BETTER, SHIVA-RAZAVI COUNTERED BY
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REFERRING TO KABUL TIMES COVERAGE OF PASHTUNISTAN DAY IN KABUL RECENTLY. HE WAS PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY THE BIG PASHTUNISTAN FLAG FEATURED ON THE FRONT PAGE. ALTHOUGH STILL SKEPTICAL, HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE THRUST OF FLATIN'S EXPLANATION THAT FLAG AND OTHER SYMBOLS OF PASHTUNISTAN MEAN LESS TO AFGHAN GOVERNMENT THAN THEY USED TO AND DAUD'S STATEMENTS ARE ALWAYS CAREFULLY GUARDED THESE DAYS AND

REFER ONLY TO THE WELL BEING AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF PUSHTUN AND BALUCHI BROTHERS. THERE IS NO MENTION OF INTEGRATING THESE PEOPLES INTO AFGHANISTAN. FLATIN NOTED THAT AFGHANS ARE CAREFUL NOT TO OFFEND THE PAKISTANIS THESE DAYS AND INCLUDE PAKISTAN AMONG "FRIENDLY NATIONS".

3. ON THE RELATED QUESTION OF BALUCHISTAN, SHIVA-RAZAVI BROUGHT OF DAUD'S CELEBRATED REFERENCE TO THE COLONIAL HERITAGE OF THE DURAND LINE ON HIS LAST TRIP TO MOSCOW, BUT HE AGAIN AGREED THAT THE AFGHANS HAVE BEEN VERY CAREFUL IN PUBLIC REFERENCES TO PAKISTAN, PARTICULARLY DURING THE PAKISTANI ELECTIONS. HE AGREED WITH FLATIN THAT THE AFGHANS WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO THE PAKISTANIS ABOUT IMPROVING RELATIONS BUT ARE WAITING UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER.

4. SHIVA-RAZAVI REFERRED TO THE SHAH'S WELL-PUBLICIZED POSITION THAT IRAN WILL NOT ACCEPT FURTHER DISINTEGRATION OF PAKISTAN. FLATIN SAID THIS SEEMED TO BE SIMILAR TO THE AFGHAN VIEW. FLATIN EMPHASIZED THAT THE AFGHANS ARE VERY NATIONALISTIC AND CAN BEST BE CHARACTERIZED AS NEITHER PRO-SOVIET NOR PRO-WESTERN BUT JUST PRO-AFGHAN. HE NOTED THAT THE U.S. TRAINS A SELECTED NUMBER OF AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS (ABOUT 15 A YEAR). WHILE NUMBERS OF AFGHANS TRAINED IN SOVIET UNION ARE ADMITTEDLY MUCH LARGER, WE FEEL AFGHANS WATCH THIS FACTOR VERY CAREFULLY AND THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMED FORCES CANNOT BE DESCRIBED AS AGENTS OF THE RUSSIANS. IN ANY CASE AFGHAN ARMED FORCES ARE MODEST IN NUMBERS AND EQUIPMENT AND HAVE A BIG COUNTRY TO COVER. SHIVA-RAZAVI AGREED, SAYING THEY WERE EVEN UNDER-EQUIPPED.

5. AT SHIVA-RAZAVI'S REQUEST, FLATIN DESCRIBED THE MAIN AREAS OF U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN TODAY, INCLUDING OUR INTEREST IN SOME SORT OF CROP OR INCOME SUBSTITUTION PROJECT TO REDUCE OPIUM GROWING. HE SEEMED INTERESTED--THOUGH NON-COMMITTAL--IN FLATIN'S SUGGESTION THAT THERE COULD BE GOOD INCOME PRODUCING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN, PARTICULARLY IF ACCESS TO IRANIAN PORTS WAS IMPROVED BY ROAD AND RAILROAD BUILDING.

6. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SHIVA-RAZAVI SAID HE HAD HEARD TWO FIGURES FOR THE NUMBER OF (MAINLY UNREGISTERED) AFGHAN WORKERS IN IRAN: 500,000 AND ONE MILLION (THE SMALLER FIGURE IS CLOSER TO OUR OWN ESTIMATES). SHIVA-RAZAVI EXPRESSED INTEREST IN FLATIN'S SUGGESTION THAT THE WEST GERMANS, WHO HAVE HAD SO MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH IMPORTING FOREIGN WORKERS, WOULD BE A GOOD SOURCE OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE ON REGULARIZING THE AFGHAN WORKER SITUATION.

7. COMMENT: SHIVA-RAZAVI CAN BE COUNTED ON TO REFLECT
OFFICIAL MFA LINE CLOSELY.
SULLIVAN

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